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# Admiral Fires Salvos Over Spending

Former naval officer Jimmy Carter has selected a no-nonsense, take-charge admiral to clean up a scandal-ridden federal agency. He may turn out to be every bit as controversial as Adm. Stansfield Turner at the CIA.

Rear Adm. Rowland G. Freeman, III, the president's choice to replace Jay Solomon at the General Services Administration, was a Navy fighter pilot in World War II. He was shot down in the Pacific, but he doesn't intend to be shot down again—least of all by friendly fire from the U.S. Army.

Circumstances placed Freeman in a position two years ago where he has to depend on Army approval to do his job as head of the Defense Systems Management College at Fort Belvoir, Va. Because the school is located on an Army base, the Pentagon's bureaucratic procedure dictates that Freeman's funds must be channeled through the Army.

Our sources indicate that this arrangement doesn't sit well at all with Freeman, a feisty, gruff-talking 57-year-old whose crusty demeanor and weatherbeaten features belie the mildness of his nickname, "Doc." He has made no secret of the fact that he'd prefer to deal directly with the secretary of defense, and his suspicion of the landlubbers who ride herd on him is apparently reciprocated by the Army.

Recently the Fort Belvoir comptroller sent Freeman a letter informing him that the management college had overspent its travel budget by \$288. Outraged at being called on the carpet over such a petty matter, Freeman fired off a far-from-contrite letter to

the Army's inspector general demanding that he decide, for once and for all, who controls the school's funds.

He has also been carrying on a running fight with his khaki-clad hosts at the Army base over a noisy detachment of military police quartered nearby. Freeman finds their presence distracting to the tight ship he runs at the college and has requested their quarters for his students.

On a more serious level, sources told our associate Peter Grant that Freeman has crossed swords with some members of the Policy Guidance Council, a group of high-level Pentagon brass which acts as the college's board of directors. Insisting that his staff be expanded to handle the revamping of military procurement procedures, Freeman pleaded for more personnel and the council agreed at its fall meeting to increase his staff from 62 to 77.

With his characteristic damn-the-torpedoes attitude, Freeman moved full-speed ahead and began hiring immediately, even though his appropriations had not been increased to cover the added staffing. At a recent council meeting, he was questioned by Army Gen. John R. Guthrie on his authority to hire personnel without funding. Freeman responded with a blast at the Army's red tape, our sources said.

Freeman told us that he has not technically exceeded his budget until the end of the fiscal year. "I have the authority to hire as long as I'm under the proper ceiling at the proper time," he said. Shrugging it off as "a routine administrative matter," Freeman said if he doesn't get the appropriations he'll simply have to trim his staff when

the time comes.

Pentagon officials, meanwhile, have scrounged funds for the additional staff positions from other programs. The money will soon be transferred to the college, they promised us.

But if his appointment is confirmed, it seems at least likely that the corruption-riddled GSA will fall under the old Chinese curse, "May you live in interesting times."